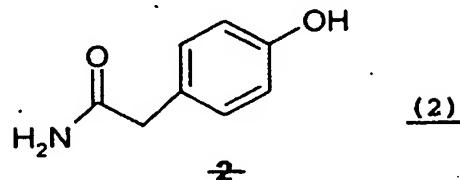


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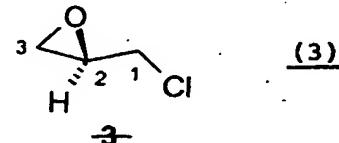
Listing of claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An improved process for the preparation of (S)-atenolol (1), comprising the steps of:

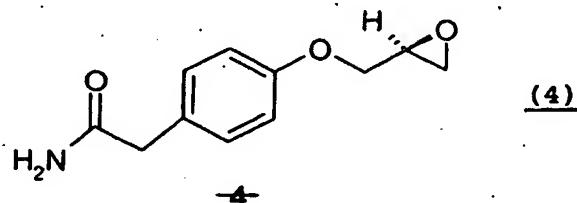
a) reacting a phenol of formula:



with an (R)-epichlorohydrin of formula:

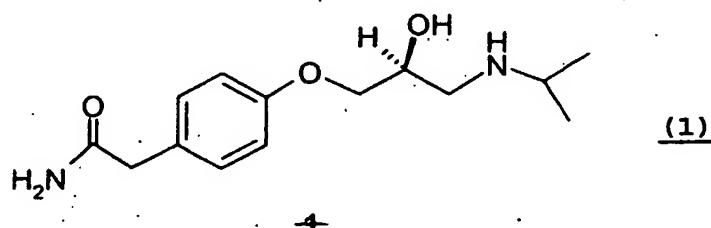


in the presence of an alkali metal hydroxide and a quaternary ammonium salt as a phase transfer catalyst in ~~an~~ a solely aqueous solution at a temperature of -10°C to 0°C to obtain optically active intermediate glycidyl ether of formula:



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b) reacting the optically active intermediate glycidil ether (4) with isopropylamine at 10° to 40° C to obtain (S)-atenolol of formula



in high optical purity of >99% ee.

2. (Currently Amended) A The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the alkali metal hydroxide is selected from sodium hydroxide or potassium hydroxide.
3. (Currently Amended) A The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the amount of alkali metal hydroxide is 1 to 1.5 moles to 1 mole of the phenol (2).
4. (Currently Amended) A The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the amount of (R)-epichlorohydrin is 1 to 3 moles to 1 mole of the phenol.
5. (Currently Amended) A The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the quaternary ammonium salt has the formula  $R^1R^2R^3R^4N^+X^-$  wherein each of  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$ ,  $R^3$  and  $R^4$  are is the same or different and are is an alkyl group groups having 1 to

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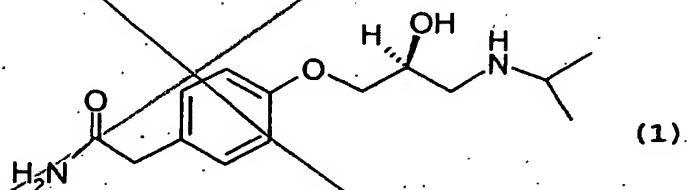
16 carbon atoms selected from methyl, ethyl, propyl, butyl, phenyl or benzyl, X is a group selected from chlorine, bromine, iodine, hydrogen sulphate or hydroxyl.

6. (Currently Amended) A The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the amount of quaternary ammonium salt is 0.001 to 2% by weight of phenol (2).

7. (Currently Amended) A The process as claimed in claim 1 further comprising formation of chlorohydrin chlorohydrine (5) as a side product.

8. (Currently Amended) A The process as claimed in claim 7 ± further comprising reacting chlorohydrin chlorohydrine (5) with isopropylamine isopropylamine at 10 to 40°C to obtain S-atenolol.

9. (New) The product of the improved process of claim 1, comprising (S)-atenolol of formula:



in high optical purity of >99% ee.